



Learning to Overcome

LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE U.S.

Many people believe learning disabilities are a sign of low intelligence; this belief is wildly incorrect. Specific learning disabilities pose unique challenges for afflicted students and are very real, physiological conditions. Let's take a look at the types of learning disabilities, along with the difficulties these students face.

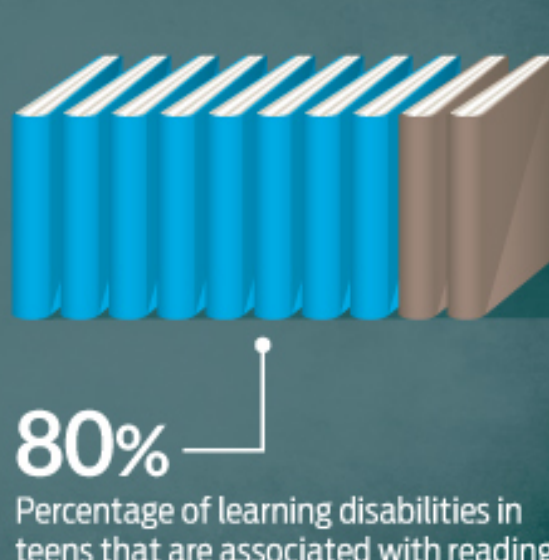
What is a Learning Disability?

Learning disabilities are disorders that affect an individual's basic psychological processes involved in comprehending specific information. This includes conditions such as perceptual handicaps, brain trauma, developmental aphasia and brain dysfunction that manifest as language and reasoning problems.

What a learning disability is **NOT**:

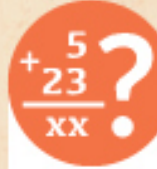


Visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation or emotional disturbance



The Most Prominent Learning Disabilities

Five learning disabilities are the most prominent among school-age children. Let's take a look at those five: their symptoms, possible causes and common issues.



Dyscalculia

What: General mathematical disability in which person cannot comprehend quantity, positive and negative number values, fractions and many simple mathematical operations
Signs: Issues with word problems, handling money, figuring out days/months, long division and patterns.



Dysgraphia

What: Writing difficulties; usually linked to brain trauma
Signs: Writing in a distorted way, consistently incorrectly spelling words and oddly spacing letters



Dyspraxia

What: Motor skills problems
Signs: Poor sense of balance and hand-eye coordination; clumsiness, frequently stumbling; irritation from loud noises and touch
In the brain: Two hemispheres in the cerebral cortex do not share information or respond to each other properly as in an unaffected brain



Dyslexia

What: Reading disorder; recently linked to genetics
Signs: Reading at lower levels than expected; inability to phonologically process words
In the brain: Most likely angular gyrus, an area toward the back of the brain that understands and translates language



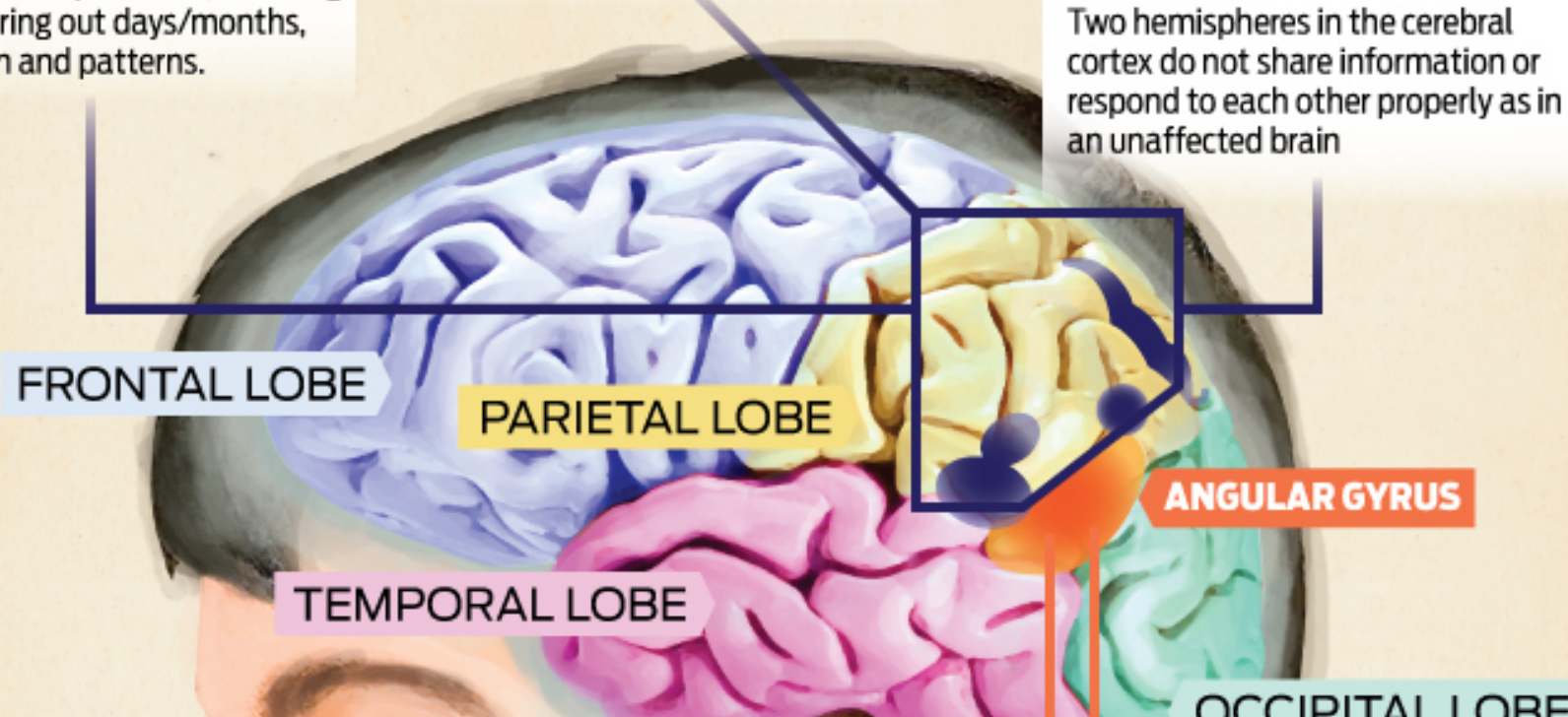
ADHD

What: Inability to focus; most common learning disability
Signs: Increased, random hyperactivity, impulsivity, short attention spans and disruptive behavior
In the brain: Neurological, but doctors have yet to uncover the specific root of the issue inside the brain



Gerstmann's Syndrome

What: Often seen after stroke or brain injury, this disorder can manifest itself via several different learning disabilities, including dysgraphia and dyscalculia
Signs: Inability to differentiate between right and left; difficulty expressing thoughts in speech and writing
In the brain: Left parietal lobe of the brain is damaged, in the angular gyrus region



The Signs

At different ages there are specific ways to tell if a child has a learning disability. Let's take a look at each age group where learning disabilities are commonly diagnosed and what some common signs and symptoms are.



Preschool

- Pronunciation difficulty
- Has a hard time memorizing the alphabet
- Trouble using buttons and zippers or tying shoes
- Cannot properly control pencils or crayons



Ages 5-9

- Hard time connecting letters and sounds
- Frequent misspellings and misreading
- Is slow learning new skills
- Cannot blend multiple sounds to form new words



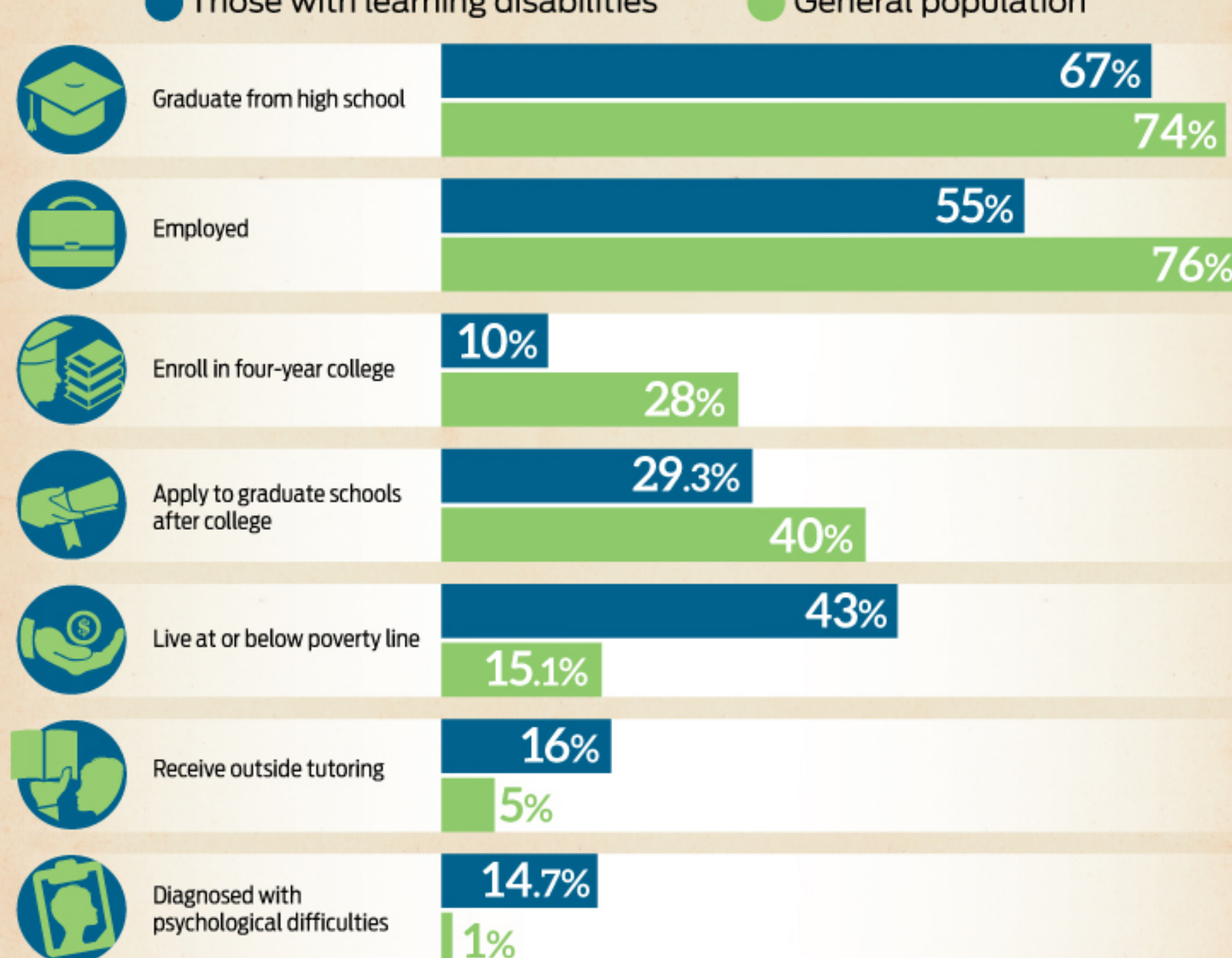
Ages 10-13

- Reading comprehension issues
- Avoids reading out loud
- Spelling the same word differently throughout a document
- Bad organizational skills

Overcoming Obstacles

People with learning disabilities come upon challenges when looking toward their futures. For many, the odds of graduating college and finding an applicable career are against them. Let's take a look at some statistics that illustrate the difficulties people with learning disabilities must face regarding education and economic status.

● Those with learning disabilities ● General population



SOURCES

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● <http://www.floridatechnet.org> ● <http://www.helpguide.org> ● <http://www.neuroanatomy.wisc.edu> ● <http://bbfndoundation.org>
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